

April 28, 2021

BMW Art & Culture will exhibit "The Pigment Change" by Almudena Romero, tenth winner of the BMW Residency, at Rencontres d'Arles.

- BMW will showcase Almudena Romero's personal exhibition in the Saint-Trophime Cloister from July 4 to August 29, 2021.
- "The Pigment Change" has been jointly published by BMW Art & Culture and Les éditions de l'air, des livres.
- As patron of the Rencontres d'Arles association, BMW has been a key partner of the Festival for twelve years running. It also provides a fleet of vehicles to transport guests, artists and exhibition organizers.



Family Identity, from the series Family Album ©Almudena Romero/BMW Residency
Photo on a cross panel, 145 x 90 cm, 2020

This year, BMW is celebrating 50 years of supporting cultural projects all over the world, in the fields of modern and contemporary art, jazz and classical music, and architecture and design. As such, it contributes to the dissemination of knowledge and the arts. In France, BMW Group France has been a patron of photography since 2003.

"The Pigment Change" project created during the BMW Residency.

"The Pigment Change" takes an original experimental and scientific approach towards natural photo production, whereby Romero's research focuses on pigment changes, with an ecological and societal commitment. Her work echoes BMW Group's vision of innovation for a more sustainable future and of production which respects the environment and its resources.

François Cheval, Artistic Director of the BMW Residency, commented on the winner's work: *"Almudena Romero, like many of her peers, believes that renewing the medium can follow the same path as the first photographic processes, while highlighting the plastic and physical characteristics of plants. Because plants are not only the subject, they also take on a new status as vectors of visual information. They are given the new role of determining the final form of the work of art and specifying its meaning."*

Given the inevitable disappearance of the silver process, the photographer seeks a virtuous practice using living materials. Her main medium is natural, at the expense of chemistry, plants and her material, as well as light specific to plants and photosynthesis.

The project is divided into four parts: *Faire une photographie* (take a photo), Family album, Offspring and The act of producing, which represent the artist's viewpoint on production or the cause of existence.

In "**Faire une photographie**", the plants are exposed to specific amounts of light to bring about a pigment change in the leaves, in spring and in fall.

In "**Family album**", Almudena exposes the negatives of her family archives directly onto cress cultivation panels to "grow" photographic prints.

In "**The act of producing**" and "**Offspring**", the photographer uses entire plants as photographic substrates on which she records her images.

"**The act of producing**" features various large-scale collages (1.5 x 2 m) made up of several leaves exposed to extraordinary quantities of UV light to bring about a pigment change. This pigment change, based on plants' survival mechanism, involves replacing the chlorophyll pigments (green) with carotenoids (yellow) to release excess energy.

The artist uses the plants' ability to change pigments to record very detailed images of her own hands while working with the plants.

In "**Offspring**", the artist uses plants' selective reproduction strategies as a metaphor to express her decision not to become a mother due to the current climate and environment crisis.

This part of the project includes a 30-day timelapse documenting the birth of a new leaf and a series of text elements printed directly onto the leaves of this plant.

The artist was able to broaden her research thanks to the resources available at the BMW Residency at the Gobelins School of Visual Arts. As such, she experimented with complex, fragile, expensive and large-size materials within the school environment, assisted by two students and supported by professors.

EXHIBITIONS.

"The Pigment Change" created as part of the BMW Residency will be exhibited:

- in the Saint-Trophime Cloister during the Rencontres d'Arles event, from July 4 to August 29, 2021.
- In the temporary Grand Palais during the Paris Photo event, from November 11 to 14, 2021.

BOOK.

"The Pigment Change" has been jointly published by BMW Art & Culture and Les éditions de l'air, des livres.

This original editorial choice supports the research and experimentation dimension of the BMW Residency at the GOBELINS School of Visual Arts.

This edition is made up of three different-sized bound booklets, inserted into a horizontal strip. The three booklets each have a different color – blue, red and green – as a tribute to the printing house's RGB and to Almudena Romero's research.

The first booklet is an introduction with a preface written by Vincent Salimon, Chairman of the BMW Group France Executive Board, and begins with a text by François Cheval, Artistic Director of the BMW Residency.

The second booklet showcases the winner's research work.

The third one features the works she created during the Residency.

The Faune typeface, created by Sandrine Nugue as part of a call for applications by the Centre National des Arts Plastiques (CNAP) in partnership with the Imprimerie Nationale group, was used for the titles.

"The Pigment Change" by Almudena Romero - BMW Residency at the GOBELINS School of Visual Arts:

- Éditions de l'air, des livres - BMW Art & Culture
- Published in: May 2021
- Price: €29
- 3 booklets of 12, 24 and 24 pages - Format: 210 x 257, 200 x 247, 190 x 237 cm

APPENDICES.**Biography of Almudena Romero.**

Almudena Romero is a plastic artist who was born in Madrid in 1986. In 2020, she worked as a photography professor as part of a Stanford University overseas study program in Florence. She is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, and holds a Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice in Art, Design and Communication and an MA in Photography from the University of the Arts London. In 2021, she was nominated for the Prix Pictet.

Since 2015, exhibitions of her work have been held at the Tate Modern-TATE Exchange, Tate Britain, The Photographer's Gallery, Tsinghua Art Museum, 104 Paris, Unseen Amsterdam, Fundacion Mapfre, London Art Fair, Brighton Photo Biennale and University of the Arts London.

Her works feature in various collections, notably including: the Stephan Loewentheil Collection, the Penumbra Foundation, the Gabriela Cendoya-Bergareche Collection, Jerome Kohler - The Philanthropic Lab, the Bow Arts Trust, the Lucy Art Residency and BBC Four. She has also received commissions from Team London Bridge, Southwark Council, Emergency Exit Artist, the Wellcome Trust & University College London, and the Bow Arts Trust.



The BMW Residency.

BMW Group France is a great believer in creation and technological innovation. The company has chosen to support photography as an original, distinct art form and an invention that contributed to the advent of the modern age in much the same way as the automobile. BMW Group France's commitment to photography has led to a unique, ambitious cultural partnership. Unique, because this partnership aims to reveal new keys to understand the interaction between art and technology and their impact on people and on society. Ambitious, because it puts the emphasis on experimentation and innovation, in both artistic and technological terms.

BMW Group France has been sponsoring photography since 2003, when it first began its partnership with Paris Photo, before teaming up with the Rencontres de la Photographie event in Arles in 2010. After having awarded prizes to artists supported by galleries, the BMW Residency was set up in 2011 with the Nicéphore Niépce Museum, then it took up residence at the GOBELINS School of Visual Arts in 2018. Celebrating its tenth anniversary this year, the Residency aims to support emerging creative talent.

The school's innovative approach to education and experimentation, and the transfer of knowledge between experts, the prize winner and students are the perfect illustration of the group's philosophy. Thanks to this patronage, BMW Group France was the first company to participate in GOBELIN's equal opportunities policy and it also funds scholarships for student programs.

As patron, BMW Group France supports and promotes the production and exhibition of work created during the Residency. The company offers the winner an €8,000 scholarship, the publication of a book in the BMW Art & Culture collection and a personal exhibition at Rencontres d'Arles and Paris Photo.

The BMW Residency selection committee includes key figures from the world of photography. The jury which selected Almudena Romero comprised the following members: François Cheval, Artistic Director of the BMW Residency, Christoph Wiesner, Director of Rencontres d'Arles, Florence Bourgeois, Artistic Director of Paris Photo, Hervé Digne, Collector, Nathalie Berriat, Director of the GOBELINS School of Visual Arts, Chantal Nedjib, Founder of l'image par l'image, Maryse Bataillard, Manager of Corporate Communications at BMW Group France.

The first ten laureates.

In 2011, **Alexandra Catiere** was the winner of the first edition. This young Belarusian artist is renowned for the delicacy and intelligence of her work, which successfully combines traditional and avant-garde techniques. Book co-produced by BMW Art & Culture and *éditions Trocadéro*. BMW Residency Collection, Alexandra Catiere 2012.

In 2012, BMW supported young French photographer **Marion Gronier** as she tackled a personal project on the human face and its masks. Her photos capture the moment when the outward mask slips and the face, now disembodied, empties. Book co-produced by BMW Art & Culture and *éditions Trocadéro*. BMW Residency Collection, Marion Gronier 2013.

In 2013, the duo **Mazaccio & Drowilal** attracted a very wide audience with the "Wild Style" project, questioning the imagery of wildness in mass culture. Book co-produced by BMW Art & Culture and *éditions Trocadéro*. BMW Residency Collection, Mazaccio & Drowilal 2014.

In 2014, **Natasha Caruana**, a young British artist, focused on seeking the truth of "love at first sight" during the BMW Residency. She took her inspiration from her own life and drew on popular myths and scientific surveys to get closer, through photography, to the truth of this eternally inexplicable phenomenon. Book co-produced by BMW Art & Culture and *éditions Trocadéro*. BMW Residency Collection, Natasha Caruana 2015.

In 2015, with her "Nicephora" project, **Alinka Echeverría**, examined the historic, technical and philosophical links between photography and ceramics. Her project took us into the Nicéphore Niépce Museum's archives. Book co-produced by BMW Art & Culture and *éditions Trocadéro*. BMW Residency Collection, Alinka Echeverria 2016.

In 2016, in her "Toujours le soleil" project for the BMW Residency **Dune Varela** examined various means of representing landscape photographed through various temporalities. She reflects on the deterioration and fragility of photography as a medium, and the incorporation of the process of disappearance into produced images. Book co-produced by BMW Art & Culture and *éditions Trocadéro*. BMW Residency Collection, Dune Varela 2017.

In 2017, "En Ville", by **Baptiste Rabichon** examined experimentation. While wandering Paris, he took photographs of eight balconies, the only internal part of Parisians' apartments that they expose to the outside world. These key features of the work are completely transformed by the photographer, who has altered the images using various traditional and modern techniques. Book co-produced by BMW Art & Culture and *éditions Trocadéro*. BMW Residency Collection, Baptiste Rabichon 2018.

In 2018, **Emeric Lhuisset** was selected by the jury for a project concerning migration as well as its symbolic vision and dimension. His project "When the Clouds Speak" smashes the taboo of immediacy and urgency and instead provides a photographic narrative over the course of people's lives. With an age-old conflict as its backdrop, the exhibition aims to encourage dialog with visitors: the creation of a shared synthesis. Book co-produced by BMW Art & Culture and *éditions Trocadéro*. BMW Residency Collection, Emeric Lhuisset 2019.

During his residency in 2019, **Lewis Bush** explored the way in which machines and artificial intelligence see and understand the world. He based the research for his "Ways of seeing algorithmically, John Berger reloaded" project on John Berger's book entitled "Ways of seeing", which was also made into a very popular BBC documentary in the UK. Driven by the technology of which he is a critic, he came up with a computer-vision experiment via an augmented reality web-app. However, due to the health crisis, this project could not be exhibited. Book co-produced by BMW Art & Culture and *éditions Trocadéro*. BMW Residency Collection, Lewis Bush 2020.

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BMW Group in France

BMW Group has four sites in France: Montigny-le-Bretonneux (headquarters), Tigery (training center), Strasbourg (international spare parts and accessories center) and Miramas (international technical testing center). Together with its sales and finance subsidiaries and its exclusive distribution network, BMW Group employs nearly 6,000 people in France. In 2020, BMW Group France registered 67,359 cars of the BMW and MINI brands and 18,081 motorcycles and scooters of the BMW Motorrad brand.

BMW Group's annual purchasing volume from French manufacturers and suppliers in France amounts to 3.5 billion euros. These include Valeo, Michelin, Plastic Omnium and Sogefi. As part of its electromobility strategy, BMW Group offers a wide range of electric and plug-in hybrid cars and two-wheelers. More than half a million electrified cars were already on the road at the end of 2019.

BMW Group France also pursues an active and long-term patronage program with renowned cultural actors such as the Rencontres de la Photographie Arles, Paris Photo and Gobelins, the school of visual arts, where the BMW Residency for emerging photography is held. For more than 30 years, BMW Group France has financed public interest projects through its Foundation, which is placed under the aegis of the Fondation de France. BMW Group's commitment to society is also reflected in French sport, notably through its partnership with the French Golf Federation (FFG).

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BMW Group

With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. The BMW Group production network comprises 31 production and assembly facilities in 15 countries; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2020, the BMW Group sold over 2.3 million passenger vehicles and more than 169,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2020 was € 5.222 billion on revenues amounting to € 98,990 billion. As of 31 December 2019, the BMW Group had a workforce of 126,016 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy.

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